

January 31, 2007

SENATE BILL PROPOSES TO STRENGTHEN STATE'S METH LAWS

BISMARCK – Laws restricting the sales of certain over-the-counter medicines used to manufacture methamphetamine work, said Attorney General Wayne Stenehjem, testifying before the Senate Judiciary Committee on Senate Bill 2319. Meth lab busts went from a high of 297 in 2003 to just 45 in 2006 and none have been reported this month.

North Dakota has been at the forefront of national efforts to curb the manufacture of methamphetamine, with strong legislation passed in 2003 and 2005 restricting the availability of certain cold and allergy medicines necessary to produce meth. Other states enacted similar laws and also saw dramatic reductions in meth labs. In 2006, the federal government passed national restrictions and required retailers to comply with both state and federal laws.

Senator Tony Grindberg, who sponsored SB 2319, said “I commend the Attorney General for his leadership regarding methamphetamine. This bill will help to create safer communities in North Dakota and save taxpayers millions of dollars that would have otherwise been required by our State's corrections system.”

“Although similar to state law, the federal law contains additional restrictions,” said Stenehjem. “Senate Bill 2319 merges the laws and creates a unified, comprehensive, set of standards that will aid law enforcement's continuing efforts to curb the manufacture, sale and use of methamphetamine.”

If SB 2319 passes, state and federal requirements will be consistent. The bill:

- Adds pediatric medications to the list of restricted products;
- Requires restricted products be kept behind the counter or in a locked cabinet where purchasers do not have direct access to the products before sale;
- Places additional – and separate - reporting requirements for both purchaser and retailer;
- Adds a penalty for providing false information on the purchase log and a notice to the customer (on the purchase log) of the penalty;
- Restricts the amount of product that may be purchased in a month.

###